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County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
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November 16, 2005

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From: David Sanders, Ph.D.
Director

MAY 17, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #2 – MOTION BY SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA RE: LENGTHS OF STAY AT EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMAND POST

INTRODUCTION

On May 17, 2005, the Board instructed the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to:

- Report back to the Board within seven (7) days on immediate steps taken to address Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) "overstays", including increasing the availability of emergency shelter beds;
- Provide monthly reports for the next year, which track the numbers of emergency shelter beds and the length of time children spend waiting for placement;
- Provide a 30-day report regarding possible short-term and long-term solutions, with attention to placement needs of the more difficult-to-place children and youth;
- Work in collaboration with the Association of Community Human Services Agencies (ACHSA) and group homes on the assessment of placement processes to identify and resolve barriers to successful placement of these youths.

SCOPE OF PROBLEM

Most often, the population of children described in the ERCP lengths-of-stay reports are "difficult-to-place" children with current behaviors that present serious risks to their health and safety, such as, violent interactions with others, illegal drug consumption, gang involvement, or chronic runaway episodes. This population also includes parenting teenagers and dependent children over the age of 18 years who do not meet the licensing provision for residence in our emergency shelters.

Since the last report dated August 19, 2005, the ERCP continued to make remarkable progress. In August 2005, there were a total of 121 children who came to ERCP, five (5) of these children stayed over eight (8) hours and fifteen (15) stayed more than four (4) hours. One hundred one (101) children were placed within four (4) hours.

In September 2005, there were a total of 58 (100%) children who came to ERCP (more than 50% less than August). Only one (2%) of the total number of children stayed longer than eight hours and five (9%) children stayed more than four hours. Ninety percent (90%) of the fifty-two (52) children were placed within four hours.

In October 2005, there were a total of fifty-seven (57) children who came to ERCP. Only one (2%) of the total number of children stayed longer than eight hours and 15 (26%) stayed longer than four hours, but none stayed longer than seven hours, twenty minutes. Forty-one (72%) of the children were placed within four hours.

Those children that remained at ERCP over four hours have general placement issues; including defiant behaviors, illicit drug use, psychiatric problems and chronic run away as the major reasons for the delay in finding suitable placements in a timely manner.

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

Additional short-term solution steps taken and progress made, to date, include:

1. DCFS placed Resource Utilization Management (RUM) staff on-call, beginning Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. through Mondays at 2:00 a.m., to assist ERCP in locating and matching placements for difficult-to-place youths.
2. DCFS published advertisements for the recruitment of licensed foster parents in the following newspapers: The Los Angeles Times, La Opinion, The Los Angeles Watts Times, The Sentinel, The Daily News, The Long Beach Press Telegram and The San Gabriel Valley News.
3. DCFS added two (2) additional contracted shelter care homes for adolescents with behavioral problems. Each home is licensed for two adolescents, for a total of four (4) additional beds.

4. DCFS forwarded letters to all Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) requesting their interest and availability for placements on a 24-hour, 7-days-a-week basis.
5. DCFS continues to explore with group home providers the development of four (4) to six (6) emergency shelter care beds for males, 13 to 17 years of age. Since the last reporting period, August 19, 2005, David and Margaret Group Home has been providing 24/7 emergency assessment beds for teenage females, 13 to 17 years of age; and has been successful in accepting and maintaining some of our most difficult-to-place youths. Additionally, Girls and Boys Town has continued providing emergency shelter care assessment beds for males, 9 to 17 years of age; and twelve (12) emergency shelter care assessment beds for females, 11 to 17 years of age.
6. DCFS has primarily focused on maintaining current bed availability.

With the expansion of licensed foster home beds, FFA beds and Group Home beds as detailed above, we believe that we have sufficient capacity to assure that few, if any children, await placement at ERCP for longer than eight (8) hours. Coupled with the long-term solutions that follow, intended to provide continued service expansion and management improvements necessary, we believe we are able to further reduce the length-of-stay for youths at ERCP.

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

As previously mentioned, ERCP has a new management team, who continues to be actively involved in this issue. The Regional Administrator and the Assistant Regional Administrators have reported ongoing tremendous progress, and continue to attend ongoing meetings with our community partners.

Furthermore, the Department continues in its efforts with the Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) to further develop long-term shelter solutions for the more challenging population of youth who await placement at ERCP for extended lengths of time. In addition to the Department's aggressive efforts to recruit and contract with licensed foster parents for the provision of Emergency Shelter Care, three DCFS/ACHSA program development groups, the "Individualized Contracting", "Development of Crisis Beds" and "Intake Receiving Centers" workgroups have developed and presented DCFS with proposals.

Additional long-term solution steps taken and progress made, to date, include:

1. DCFS staff met with representatives of SEIU Local 535 to expand input and consider workplace-related perspectives as solutions are proposed.

2. DCFS is working with the Probation Department to develop a plan to utilize some of the placement facilities which Probation contracts, so that this support can be enlisted, when a youth whose treatment needs can best be serviced by those agencies which enter the ERCP.
3. DCFS has met with Children Are Our Future to develop six shelter care/assessment beds for male youth. It is expected that this home will be up and ready to accept youth within four months.

SUMMARY

There has been significant decrease in the amount of children awaiting placement. The Deputy Director and Regional Administrator have been working in collaboration with Regional Administrators to maximize regional resources and to limit the utilization of the ERCP resources to hard-to-place children.

The attached chart provides you with a detailed accounting of those children who were brought to Emergency Command Post (ERCP) during the month of October 2005. During this reporting period, there were a total of 57 children who were brought to ERCP while awaiting placement.

Of those 57 children (100%), 41 (72%) were placed with 0 to 4 hours. Of the remaining 16 children (28%), only 1 (2%) remained at ERCP for more than eight hours. The other 15 children (26%) took between four to eight hours to place. Those children that remained over four hours have general placement issues including defiant behaviors, illicit drug use, psychiatric problems and chronic run away as the major reasons for the delay in finding suitable placement.

The Department remains committed to the goal and ensuring prompt response and processing of Emergency Response Command Post placement.

We look forward to reporting back to the Board within 90 days as to our continued progress. If you have any further questions, please call me at (213) 351-5600, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AW:JL:eaf

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMAND POST'S MONTHLY OVERSTAY REPORT – MINORS AT ERCP OCTOBER 2005

Numbers of children and youth who stayed 4 hours and longer by age:
Total: 16 (28%)

Hours	0-10 years	11-14 years	15-18 years	19 and over	TOTALS	
0 to 4	10	15	16	0	41	72%
4 to 8	1	8	8	0	15	28%
9 to 13	0	0	1	0	1	2%
14 to 19	0	0	0	0	0	
20 to 23	0	0	0	0	0	-
24 to 28	0	0	0	0	0	-
29 to 32	0	0	0	0	0	-
33 and over	0	0	0	0	0	-
TOTALS	11(19%)	21(37%)	25(44%)	0	57	100%

Children and youth's placement type prior to stay at ERCP:

Placement	0-10 years	11-14 years	15-18 years	19 and over	TOTALS	
Home of parent	1	1	3	0	5	31%
Adoptive parent	0	0	0	0	0	
Home of Relative	0	0	0	0	0	
Foster Home	0	4	3	0	7	44%
Group Home	0	1	3	0	4	25%
Hospital	0	0	0	0	0	
Probation	0	0	0	0	0	
Law Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	
TOTALS	1(6%)	6(38%)	9(56%)	0	16	100%

Numbers of Children and Youth who came to ERCP by age and Gender: Total: 57

0-10 years		11-14 years		15-18 years		19 and over	
11(19%)		21(37%)		25(44%)		-	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
6	5	8	13	11	14	0	0

Children and Youth's placement type following their stay at ERCP:

Placement	0-10 years	11-14 years	15-18 years	19 and over	TOTALS	
Home of Parent	0	0	0	0		
Home of Relative	0	0	0	0		
Foster Home	1	5	8	0	14	87%
Group Home	0	1	1	0	2	13%
AWOL	0	0	0	0		
Hospital	0	0	0	0		
TOTALS	1(6%)	6(38%)	9(56%)	0	16	100%